



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Nicaragua Country Brief Sept 2024



In Numbers*



1.4 million people are facing undernourishment (SOFI, 2024)



1,312.45 mt of food distributed for school feeding between June and August



USD 6.1 million six-months (October 2024 - March 2025) net funding requirements



183,754 people assisted in September 2024



*Preliminary figures

Operational Updates

Country Strategic Plan (2024-2029)

- WFP Nicaragua has initiated its new Country Strategic Plan (CSP) for 2024-2029 and is relentlessly working to secure funding. Beginning in July 2024, the new plan will continue providing school meals and exploring the transition to a home-grown model that includes locally produced fresh food, while also supporting smallholder farmers by linking them to a stable market.
- Results from the previous 2019 – 2014 Country Strategic Plan can be found here:** [Nicaragua CSP 2019-2014 Results](#)

School Feeding

- 181,740 children received warm school meals in 47 municipalities in the Dry Corridor as part of the ongoing support to the Ministry of Education's Integral School Feeding Programme (PINE-MINED). School feeding distributions will continue during the next three months and through the end of the school year, serving as a crucial safety net and incentivizing school attendance.
- To raise awareness on healthy eating habits, WFP distributed 15,528 posters on Food Security and Nutrition (FSN), the food traffic light system, food hygiene and handwashing practices in 2,746 schools within the Dry Corridor, promoting smart nutrition among students. This is part of WFP's efforts to tackle the double burden of malnutrition that prevails in Nicaragua.
- Infrastructure improvements in 11 schools in the Dry Corridor serving 1,192 students are nearing completion, however heavy rains have posed some delays in construction. WFP expects to resume work shortly.

Emergency Preparedness and Response

- As the hurricane season continues, WFP has secured a small contingency stock in anticipation of potential events in the coming months. This will enable a prompt response to affected populations and will mitigate livelihood impacts. At the same time, WFP is also focusing on identifying Anticipatory Actions within early warning strategies. Collaborating with smallholder farmers' organizations, the aim is to assess their capacities and resources for anticipating multi-hazard risks and mitigating impacts on local food systems, particularly those linked to school meals programs.

Operational Context

Nicaragua, the largest country in Central America, remains one of the poorest in Latin America and the Caribbean. Its economy relies on light manufacturing, services, and agriculture, which accounts for 8% of GDP. Despite recent growth, multiple crises and global challenges highlight the vulnerability of its food systems.

Nicaragua's economy and social outcomes are highly susceptible to external shocks and natural hazards due to its dependence on climate-sensitive sectors. Ranked 20th in the 2024 World Risk Index, recurrent extreme climate events significantly contribute to food insecurity, with 19.6% of the population undernourished, making it the fourth highest in the region (2024, SOFI).

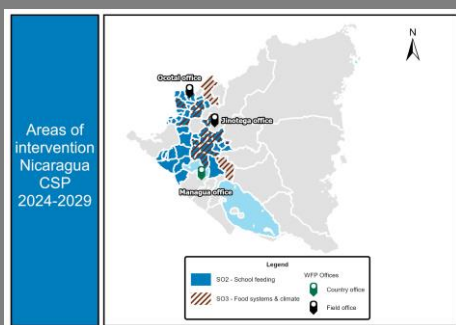
According to the latest national census, 40% of the population lives in rural areas, with about half in poverty and 16.3% in extreme poverty. Agriculture is the main livelihood for 73% of the rural population. Smallholder farmers, who produce 79% of basic food staples, face high levels of food insecurity. Gender inequality further hinders women farmers' access to markets.

High informal employment leaves poor households with unstable incomes, struggling to access food. In the Dry Corridor, climate variability severely affects family farming, leading to agricultural losses and undermining food security. Additionally, high food prices and global economic pressures increase agricultural input costs, threatening local food systems. Many vulnerable households resort to negative food-related coping strategies and accumulate debt as a means of survival.

WFP supports the Government in achieving Zero Hunger in vulnerable Dry Corridor communities of Nicaragua by enhancing nutrition-sensitive social protection programmes. WFP has been present in the country since 1971.

To learn more about Nicaragua's context, you can click here: [Nicaragua Country Context](#).

*2024 State of Food and Nutrition Security report



Population: **6.9 million**

2023/4 Human Development Index: **130 out of 193**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

Chronic malnutrition (Stunting): **14.9% of children less than 5 years old**

WFP Country Strategic Plan

Country Strategic Plan (2019-2024)		
Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
80.9 M	23 M	9.7 M

Strategic Result 1: People are better able to meet their urgent food and nutrition needs

Strategic Outcome 1: Populations affected by or exposed to crises in Nicaragua meet their food, nutrition and other urgent essential needs in an inclusive way during shocks, stressors and protracted crises, and benefit from the strengthening of capacities and systems for integrated disaster risk management by 2029.

Focus area: Crisis response

Activities:

- Provide humanitarian assistance to people affected by or exposed to crises and provide technical support to strengthen the capacities of disaster risk management actors and response systems, using an approach that takes account of nutrition, protection, gender and interculturality issues.

Strategic Result 2: People have better nutrition, health and education outcomes

Strategic Outcome 2: Girls, boys and adolescents in schools and their families in priority areas of Nicaragua benefit from a strengthened social protection system, including a comprehensive school feeding programme with fresh, nutritious and locally produced food that will positively contribute to their nutrition, health and education outcomes by 2029.

Focus area: Resilience building

Activities:

- Provide nutritious meals to girls, boys and adolescents through the national school feeding programme, contributing to the strengthening of national social protection programmes using approaches that take account of gender, protection, nutrition, interculturality and climate resilience.

Strategic Result 3: People have improved and sustainable livelihoods

Strategic Outcome 3: Smallholders and key food systems actors in prioritized areas of Nicaragua, especially women, are resilient with sustainable and climate adaptive capacities that improve their access to healthy diets and markets, particularly institutional market of home-grown school feeding by 2029.

Focus area: Resilience building

Activities:

- Strengthen adaptive capacities and develop solutions and models for smallholders, other key food system actors and institutions to enhance climate resilience, food security and nutrition; and improve their access to markets in an equitable and equal manner.
- Provide technical assistance to smallholder farmers to increase their resilience, improve their livelihoods and reduce their vulnerability to adverse climate events.

Strategic Result 5: Humanitarian and development actors are more efficient and effective

Strategic Outcome 4: National institutions and United Nations entities receive operational support services from WFP in an effective, efficient and reliable manner in Nicaragua, enabling them to assist people affected by or exposed to crises until 2029.

Focus area: Crisis response

Activities:

- Provide services required by national institutions and United Nations entities to facilitate timely assistance for people affected by or exposed to crises.

Strengthening Local Food Systems

- Strengthened by past interventions, smallholder farmers' organizations have successfully delivered 6,000 pounds of beans to Walmart Nicaragua. This is the result of an alliance formed through improved access to markets for smallholder farmers.

Gender and Nutrition

- WFP has made significant strides in integrating Social and Behavioural Change (SBC) theory into its nutrition and gender initiatives. With the launch of its SBC Action Plan, WFP will gradually implement strategies in three key programmatic areas: school feeding, emergency preparedness, and building smallholder farmers' resilience. Ongoing projects will be among the first to use the new Facilitators Guide for SBC, promoting positive changes in environments, societies, and behaviours.
- Aligned with WFP's zero-tolerance policy on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), smallholder farmer organizations with WFP's sub-offices received training and support on improvement plans to strengthen their PSEA capacities.

Monitoring

- In September, efforts centered on designing tools for launching the Community Feedback Mechanism (CFM) under the new CSP. This involved creating registration formats, defining communication channels, and establishing case response procedures. The CFM will complement WFP's monitoring systems by providing a channel for incident reporting and collecting feedback from project beneficiaries, helping to identify best practices and areas for improvement. Staff at WFP's sub-office received training on these tools.
- WFP coordinated the beneficiary registration process for a project that will support vulnerable populations through the establishment of family vegetable gardens, working in partnership with farmers' organizations. To empower these local actors, WFP provided training on how to carry out these activities to 45 technicians and promoters from nine smallholder farmers' organizations and monitored the validation of selection criteria.

Challenges

- Securing funding for the upcoming initiatives for the new Country Strategic Plan remains critical for WFP. This challenge is further exacerbated by a global context marked by limited resources and competing priorities.
- Recent erratic rainfalls have challenged activity planning and rural road access. WFP is actively monitoring and adapting to prevent risks for beneficiaries and staff.

Impact of Limited Funding

- WFP urgently requires **USD 6.1 million** to be able to respond to the needs of the **upcoming six-months**. Without additional funding secured, WFP will be unable to reach its commitments to support vital social protection programs.

Donors

Global Agriculture and Food Security Program, USAID, European Commission, Canada, Switzerland, Nicaragua, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, and private donors.

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